

TO THE

No 10

Right Reverend Father in God,

H E N R Y

Lord Bishop of L O N D O N.

M Y L O R D,



*Humbly Offer to Your Lordship's  
Gracious Perusal a Sermon, which  
among many others, I Preacht  
last Summer at Sabbsworth ;  
Judging this the truest way to give Your  
Lordship an Impartial and Naked Account  
of my self.*

A

Your

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

Your Lordship was pleased Five Years ago to take me into Your Gracious Protection, and soon after to raise me from the Dust, and Ordain me, and procure me an Honest Maintenance : Therefore, that Your Lordship might not repent of Your Gracious Vouchsafements , I have made it my whole Business ever since, to become an Englishman, and a Right Son of the Church, by Studying her Constitutions and Method of Teaching : What I have performed in these, let Your Lordship with a Favourable Eye, judge.

I am, My Lord, the Work of Your Hands ; and as Your Lordship has begun to fashion me, so You may make me up into what You please : I want, My Lord, but the Opportunity of doing my Self and Others Good ; and although my Presence be weak, yet I have (Thank God) seriously, and to my Comfort, weighed the Importance of my Undertaking ; and I hope Your Lordship  
will

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*will never find me wanting Diligence and Faithfulness, and Care in the Discharging of any Office that Your Lordship may be pleased to put me upon. But this, My Lord, I must humbly expect at Your Lordship's Hands, who best know in Your great Wisdom what I am fit for. In the mean time I make daily Prayers for Your Lordship's Health and Happiness, and that God will be pleased to continue long Your Lordship among us, for the Glory and Benefit of the Church and Kingdom, and the Joy and Comfort of,*

MY LORD,

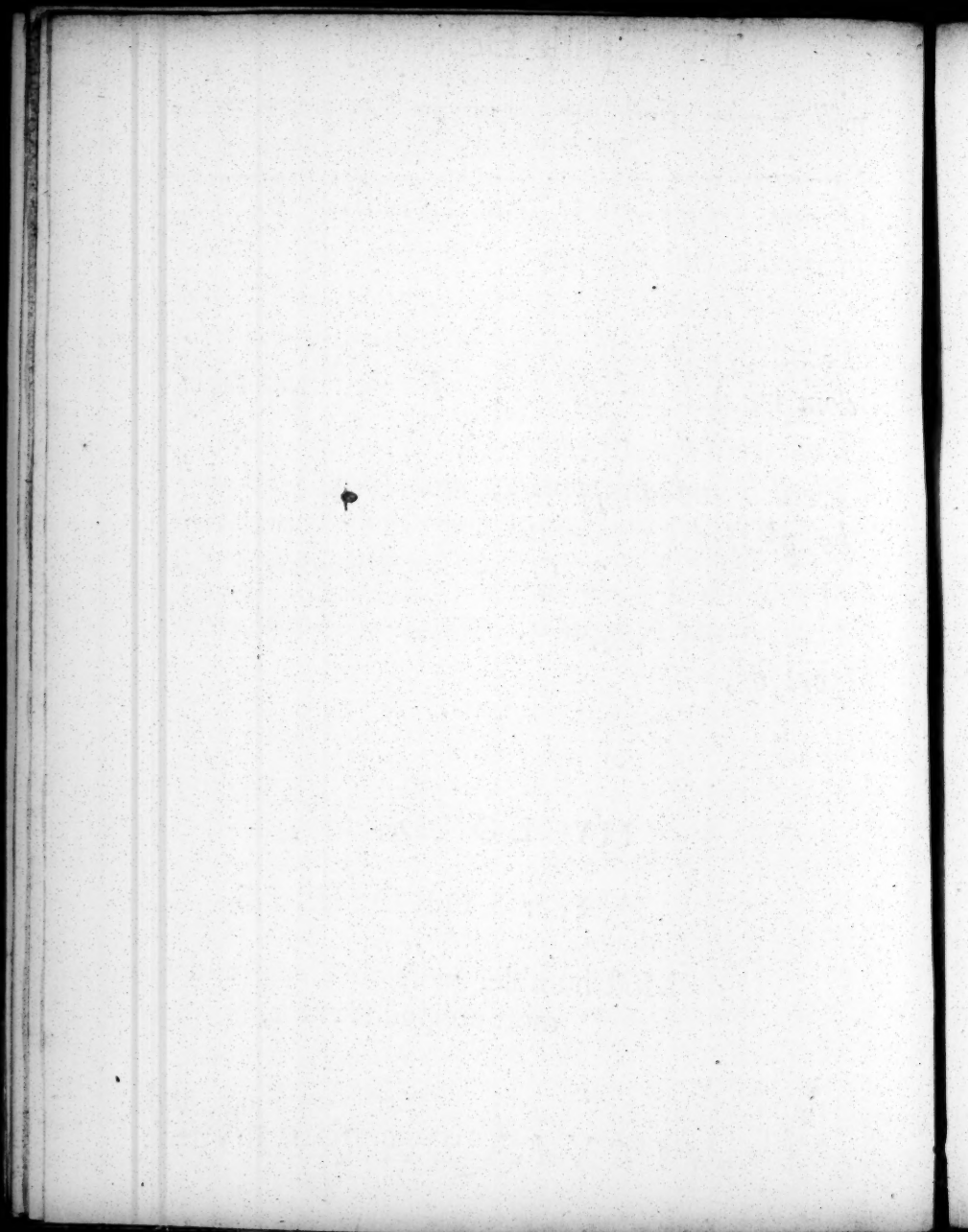
Your LORDSHIP'S

Most humble, most obedient, and  
most obliged Servant,

London,  
Dec. 19. 1684.

ALEXANDER SIOX







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A  
S E R M O N

Preached on St. Mark 7:37.

*He has done all things well.*

**T**HESE Words contain a part of the applause which the Multitude gave to our Saviour, after he had cured a deaf-dumb Man by only putting his Fingers into his Ears, and touching his Tongue with his Spittle, and looking up to Heaven, and saying, *Be open'd ; that is, Let all the Impediments be removed that thou hast in thy Hearing and Speech.*

This was a Wonderful Miracle, to cure incurable Diseases (such as Natural Deafness and Dumbness are) by Words and other means insignificant of themselves, as bare Touching, and a Man's Spittle, which have no Natural Virtue

in them to produce that effect: And therefore our Saviour ( who well knew that a Multitude are given to talk, and as yet had Reasons to conceal himself ) charged them not to divulge it, and by that means discover him.

But 'tis the custom of common People to talk the more, when commanded to hold their Tongue: It fell out that this Wondering Multitude, the more our Saviour *charged them to tell no Man, so much the more a great deal they publisht it; being astonisht beyond measure, and saying, He has done all things well, he makes both the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak.*

And as Fools will sometimes give sound Advices by chance, so they spoke, in so saying, a great deal of Truth more than they were aware of: For these Words may be taken for a proper and full account of our Saviours Ministry, and the just Apology or Defence of his Mediatorial Office.

Therefore I shall examine them under another prospect, and stretch them into a wider sense than they intended; and prove that our Saviours Oeconomy was the Wisest Contrivance that could ever enter into the thoughts of Man; That all that happen'd to him in his Mediatorship; All that he did, or said, or suffered, was calculated by an All-knowing Providence; That a Divine Wisdom did shine through all.

All that belongs to our Saviour as Mediator may be reduced under four Heads: His *Circumstances* (as I may call them) his *Life*, his *Doctrine*, and his *Miracles*: I will shew that *he has done well in all these*, (That he that came to Redeem Mankind by satisfying for their Sins could not have pitcht upon a better way to effect it than our Saviour did; ) And thus bottom our Faith, or rather unravel the Foundation of it, that it may appear to the World how substantial it is, and we be ready to answer when any Man shall ask us, *why we are Christians*.

1 Pet. 3. 15.

First, I say, That the *Circumstances* of our Saviour were wisely contrived.

There are three sorts of Greatness: The Greatness of Kings, the Greatness of the Learned, and the Greatness of Holy Men. The generality of the Jews expected the first in our Saviour; they sought in him a Conqueror that should vanquish and rout the Roman Armies, and restore them to their former Independency and Power: But this was not becoming the Prince of Peace, and the Mediator between God and Man: He came to reconcile Men to God and one to another, to save their Souls as well as Bodies; And a tumultuous Warlike Life was not fit for such a design. Certain blind Zealots among them lookt for the Second; They thought that he would have de-

Joh. 4. 25.

ned all nice points, and satisfied the frivolous Curiosity of their Rabbyes ; and the very Woman of *Samaria* was in hopes that the Messiah would *tell them all things* : But neither was this agreeable with our Saviours purpose ; He aim'd higher than the setting up of a School and being the Head of a Particular Sect : His design was to clear the way to Heaven and cleanse the Minds and Affections of Men ; not to describe the Phœnomena of Nature, and instruct them in insignificant Truths : Therefore it was expedient that he should have the Greatness only of a Saint : For he came to restore Nature, the great loss of which was Holyness : So that it did not become him to Reign and Conquer, for these were Introduc'd by Sin, (for before it there had been no need of Kings, nor occasion of Wars, and every Family had lived secure and peaceable by it self : ) Nor to Write and Dispute, and find out Inventions, and talk of Learning ; for these are but a consequence of the Fall of Adam likewise (for in the State of Innocence, Men had known enough Naturally, to serve the ends of a harmless Life ; and not needed superfluous Accommodations, and Curious Knowledge ; ) But only to be holy, and patient, humble, and without Sin, which is the Character of a Saviour : And that Christ had this sort of Greatness, will appear by examining his chief Circumstances.

His

His *Birth* was obscure in the estimate of the World : His supposed Father was an ordinary Tradesman , and his Mother earned her Living by Spinning, as Historians inform us. If He had been born of an Illustrious Family, his success might have been attributed to his Relation, and the Interest of his Blood and Alliance : If of a Rich, it might have been suggested that Money had got him Followers : But all his Relations were poor, and unknown, himself so till his Doctrine and Miracles made him famous. His Original was no other than that of some of the ancient Prophets, who were *Shepherds* and *Herdsmen*, as *Amos* among others. Amos 1. 1.

But if we turn the Glass we shall see him highly descended, even formed by God in a special manner ; without any Father of his Humane Nature but the Holy Ghost, and begotten of God himself as to his Divine Nature ; Singular by his Eternal Generation , and of the same Humane Descent as *Adam*, the Noblest of all Men, since he derived his Pedegree from God, and is called *His Son* in the Scripture. Luk 3. 38.

His *Employment* and *Education* were but mean likewise in appearance : He followed his reputed Father's Trade till he begun his Prophetical Office. And as for his Breeding, *How knows this Man Letters*, said the Jews, *having never learnt ?* Joh. 7. 15.  
*Whence*



a. 13. 54. *Whence has he this Wisdom?* It seems he had none of the School-Accomplishments. He lived in the rudest part of *Judea, Galilee*, and obscurest Village of *Galilee, Nazareth*: And, *Out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet*, said the Priests and Pharisees: *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* said *Nathanael* to *Philip*. If he had been bred up a Scholar, his prevailing upon the Minds of Men had been imputed to his Learning, and Skill in Oratory: If a Souldier or a Courtier, his Arms and Power, his Dexterity and Insinuations had been alledged as the Causes of his Success: But he was nothing less than this; He refused to be made King, and hid himself from the Multitude to avoid their Applications. His Nation, Relations, Friends scorn'd him, and traduc'd him as an Impostor, a Stirring-seditious Man, none but inconsiderable People followed him, that his Parts might the better prove themselves to be Divine: And indeed they were so: His Imployment even from the Age of Twelve, was  
 oh. 7. 52. *the Business of his Father*, the Commission which he had received from God, greater than any that Kings can give by their Charters; and his Education and School was in Heaven; His Master and Tutor God himself: *No Man has ascended up into*  
 oh. 1. 46. *Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.*  
 oh. 6. 15.  
 1c. 2. 49.  
 h 3. 13.



At his Tryal there appear'd no Evidence for him, (although he might have produc'd infinite Witnesses of his Innocence ) no Counsel, no Help : If Orators and Lawyers had pleaded his Cause, the Injustice of his Accusers had been set out by ordinary Means ; but he took a contrary Method ; His only Innocence did confound *Pilate*, and open'd his Eyes so, that he plainly saw the Malice of his Enemies. Wicked Men will plead *Not Guilty*, but he did not so much as plead : *He open'd not his Mouth, he was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and a Sheep before the Shearer.* Before the Priests he answer'd nothing at first, because he knew that his Tryal was but a Pretence ; That they were resolved to have his Life, and that the best Defence in the World would not save him : At last he appealed to all the World that had heard him, whether there was any thing of Sedition or Irreligion in his Doctrine ; More he would not say, this being the best Vindication that a Man can give of himself : And when the Judge trifled about with insignificant Questions, he would answer no more : And even when checkt by him for his Incivility, ( as *Pilate* thought his refusing to give him Answers was ) he wisely taught and frighted him, by putting him in mind that his Power was from God ; that he was bound to make a Rational, not Arbitrary.

Mar. 15. 20

Isai. 53. 7

Mat. 26. 6

Eccl. 27. 12

Mar. 14. 6

Eccl. 15. 3, 1

Luk. 12. 1

Joh. 18. 2

Joh. 19. 10

bitrary Use of it, and that *He that had delivered him unto him had the greater sin.* Before Herod he would speak never a word, because it was meer Curiosity that made the Tetrarch ask him Questions; he was in Hopes *to have seen some Miracle done by him,* but did not think of doing him Justice.

Luk. 23. 8, 9.

One of his Disciples sold him, another denied him, *all forsook him and fled,* that there might be no pretence, no colour of Humane Help in the case: And yet he bore all this with an unmoved Constancy, which (if any thing) must needs argue extraordinary and prodigious Strength of Mind, or Supernatural Assistance, or both.

Mar. 14. 50.

His *Death* was infamous and cruel, the *Preparatives* to it dejecting and ignominious. The Cross was a Punishment inflicted upon Slaves, and he was Crucified, and between two High-way-men too: And to make the Victim *ready to be offer'd,* the Mockeries of a Crowd of People, the Raileries of the Priests and Senators; the Jestings of them that pass by, and of his very Fellow-Sufferers, whipping, buffetting, spitting, were the Ingredients: The greatest King or Scholar meerly so, had not been proof against this, but would have betray'd his Weakness and Frailty: For, who could bear the Scorns and Affronts of a Multitude, the Odium of all the Great Men in a Nation,

Tim. 4. 6.

Nation, and withal the most Exquisite Sufferings that could be inflicted on, or born by Man, without shrinking under the Burthen? I defie the greatest Courage upon Earth, and the perfectest Stoick to bear half so much as this amounts to : But our Blessed Saviour held it out, and enjoy'd amidst all these, presence and serenity of Mind beyond all imagination : He advised St. *Peter* at his Tryal by his Looks, and comforted his Friends in Tears about him on his way to the Cross : Only when the Weight of God's Anger prest hard upon him, he was a little discomposed, both before his Tryal, and near his Death : He wisht with God's consent that so much Pain might be waved ; and humbly complained that God had forsaken him : But as to Men he remained unshaken and unmoved, because his own Virtue and God's Assistance sustained him : And how destitute soever of all Humane Succour, in that there was none to help and comfort him, yet *his own Arm*, his own Strength brought Salvation unto him, *his Fury* and Divine Power upheld him.

His *Resurrection* and *Ascension* were private. He could bear Shame and Death in publick, but did not care to shew his Greatness and Exaltation to the World : Another having vanquisht Death, and render'd of no effect the Malicious Attempts of the Priests and Pharisees, would have insulted

upon them, and quick as a Spirit publickly terrified them : But he shewed himself only to a few Honest Witnesses, that the thing might be beyond all doubt ; but otherwise was so far from Ostentation and Revenge, that he retired while upon Earth, and shortly after went up to Heaven ; a sign that he was replenisht with Essential Greatness, and scorn'd the feeble part of it, the being taken notice of ; that he was indeed above Humane Greatness, above the Greatness both of Kings and Doctors, and really full of the Truer and Nobler sort of Greatness belonging only to Holy Men. The World had refused sufficient Proofs of his Divinity, and now he would not give them sensible Proofs of it, although most Glorious and Well-reflecting upon him : They did not deserve to see him great, having scorn'd him when mean and despicable ; and as he bore the Scorn and Contempt of the World before, without dejection of Spirit, so now he scorn'd their Esteem and Admiration, and bore his Greatness without Pride and Elevation of Mind : A Mark that he was Proof against Humane Greatness and Meanness, and infinitely above both, and susceptible only of Supernatural and Divine Greatness.

Thus I have trac'd the Holy *JESUS* through all the Stages of his Incarnation, from his Birth  
up

up to his Ascension, and discover'd in him nothing but Greatness every way, such as became a Saint and a Saviour: I proceed to the second Head, his *Life*, to shew that in it likewise he *has done well*.

The Life of our Blessed Saviour was the Holyest Life that ever was seen upon Earth, as Holy as could be desired by God himself, a Heap and Meeting of all manner of Virtues: He was the Son, and only Son of God, and by that Qualification infinitely Exalted above all the Sons of Men; and yet how Studious of Humility, that Lovely Virtue, and the Foundation of all others! He was a Saint by Nature, and needed not have followed the hard Method by which Sinners do become Saints, Austerity and Mortification; and yet would frequently be Fasting and Watching. How sparing, and common, and course was his ordinary Diet? *He had Meat to eat that Men* Joh. 4. 32.  
*knew not of.* How often did he spend the Night in Meditation, and willingly deprive himself of Sleep? He had plenty of all Graces in him, and yet as if he had been most destitute of them, was sometimes whole Nights in Prayers: In the Day-time *he* was commonly imployed in Offices of Charity, *and went about doing good.* He was Act. 10. 3  
Master of Men and Devils, and yet how meek and gentle towards all Men, even to the Devil in



the Defart, who tempted him with the utmost Impudence, contenting himself to send him away with a mild rebuke, *Get thee hence, Satan.* He was Almighty, and proved himself to be so on several Occasions, and yet he submitted himself to the Devil to be tempted by him, and to Men to be scorn'd and abused by them: There was not the least mixture of sinful Infirmary in him, and he defied the Jews to find any, *Which of you convinceth me of sin?*

It would be endless to insist on all his particular Virtues; I shall take further notice only of three: He was Dutiful to his Parents, Loyal to his Superiours, and Religious towards God: Or the best Son, the best Subject, and the best Christian that ever was, (if we may call him a Christian, from whom all Christians derive that Glorious Title.)

His Duty towards his Parents is unparallell'd: Although the Son of God, yet *he was subject* not only to his Mother, but also to *Joseph* his reputed Father: He was so tender of his Mother, that he took care of her to his dying hour, and recommended her to his beloved Disciple hanging on the Cross; and yet his affection towards her was free from that imperfect and soft fondness, by which we do commonly express our love to our Friends and Relations; this is a kind of



of a sin, and therefore he was without it: *Who is my Mother, and who are my Brothers?* said he Mat. 12. 48. to one that interrupted his Preaching to tell him that they desired to see him: To intimate that our love to our Relations and Friends, and in general to the Things of this World, ought to be founded on Virtue and Duty, not guided by blind passion, and disorderly affection.

He was a very Loyal Subject. The *Romans* had lately Conquer'd *Judea*, and Emperors more lately Inslaved the *Romans*; so that being a *Jew*, and one of the Royal Family, that might lay claim to the Scepter; and the Dominion of the *Romans* over the *Jews* being unlawful, and that of Emperors over the *Romans*, an Usurpation; He had the fairest pretence in the World to take up Arms against the *Roman* Governours, cry *Liberty* and *Property*, at least desire Redress of Grievances: And yet he did nothing of this; he Mat. 22. 21. & 17. 27. Obeyed the then Laws and Magistrates, and commanded to pay, and himself paid Tribute to *Cesar*. If he had been born in a Commonwealth, he would have been a Commonwealth-Man; but being born in an Empire, whether lawful or no he inquired not, but gave a good example of Obedience to others. How much more would he have done so, had he been born under a King, whose Ancestors had held that Throne time out  
of

of mind, and were at first lawfully Constituted? This is a great Lesson to us, who live under a Christian Prince, our Natural and Lawful Sovereign, to behave our selves with all Loyalty towards his Government, and upon no pretence whatsoever recede in the least from our Allegiance.

But the greatest of our Saviour's Virtues is still behind, his Piety towards God and his Church : The *Jews* had strangely corrupted their Religion; they had set up the Constitutions of Men instead of the Ordinances of God; and neglecting *Mercy and Judgment the weighty Matters of the Law*, did stick purely to outward Performances: He was come to take away the Ceremonial part of the Law of *Moses*, ( and therefore those Customs also that were not derived from him, but from after Ages ) and design'd to establish a holy and perfect Religion in the room of it; and yet how gently he introduc'd this pure Religion! How he begun by laying a good Foundation, *viz.* inward Purity, and the exact Observation of the Moral Law! How in the mean time he comply'd with indifferent and harmless Rites, specially decent and significant Ones! He submitted himself to be Circumcised, although he was to abolish Circumcision: He Celebrated the Passover an hour before he Substituted his

his holy Supper in its place : He was come to annul all Jewish Holy-days, and yet observed even those that were sprung up since *Moses* ; the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, which Joh. 10. 22 (by the Circumstance of being Winter then) must be that which was Instituted by *Judas Maccabeus*. 1 Macc. 4. 55 If he thus Obey'd the Laws of a Corrupt Church, what must we think he would have done, had he lived in a pure One, whose Laws were Rational and Decent ? And therefore they that do not comply with the Ceremonies of Ours, must either shew that they are more Superstitious than the Jewish were ; or by Miracles or Prophecies produce their Commission from God, to set up a more perfect way of Worship : Till they do one of these, they are obliged to conform to her Orders ; and if they do not, they must give me leave to tell them, that they do not imitate the Example of Christ.

The third thing to be examin'd is Christ's *Doctrine*, in which he has *done as well* as in the two former.

The best Science and most useful Art that can ever be taught or learn'd by Man, is, The Method by which he may be as Happy here as possible, and infinitely Happy hereafter : For, all other Sciences and Arts are subservient to this, this comprehends them all ; and a Man that is

as Happy here as Mortality will let him, and has Well-grounded and Rational Hopes of being perfectly and for ever so after Death, is indeed the greatest Doctor and Scholar in the World ; for he knows the most profitable Things, and has the surest Method to attain the injoyment of them. This very Science and Method our Saviour taught us. The Heathen World had been in quest after Truth for many Ages ; the *Jews* half knew it ; but neither could ever find its Point and Center : But our Saviour removed the Obstacles, and cleared the way, and laid open that admirable and so long sought-after Science : He gave us true Notions of Things, and shewed us a compendious way to Happiness : He taught us what God is, what we are, what is our Duty to God, how far distant we are from him, which way we may approach him, and be like him ; what we owe to other Men and our selves, what we are to do to please God, and be reconciled with him, and prevent displeasing him for the future. In a word, he prescribed an Infalible Method of Happiness here, and Salvation hereafter, if Men will but follow it.

The chief and almost sole Ingredient of this Receipt and Method, is Virtue and a good Life : This is the Article most insisted on by our Blessed Saviour, and by him ofteneft inculcated and repeated :

peated : He knew the Errours of Historians in Matters of Fact, and of Philosophers in Matters of Reasoning, and might have redrest them if he had pleased ; but he said never a word of these, because he had greater Errours to mend : The several gross Mistakes of the Heathens in their various Religions were not hidden from him : The numerous Heresies among the *Jews*, (specially that Fundamental one defended by the *Sadducees*, who denied the Immortality of the Soul, and consequently the Resurrection of the Body) were plainly known to his infinite Wisdom, and yet he did not confute them, but contented himself with well Teaching. Only once being prest by the Importunity of those Miscreants, he smartly and clearly reprov'd their Error, and the People marvelled at his Argument, and themselves had nothing to answer. And another time he catcht the Pharisees by a plain Question about the sense of the first Verse of the 110th Psalm. Otherwise his Sermons had generally for subject inward Purity and Holyness, to give us this Important Lesson, That his Religion is not a formal angry Science, full of Nice and Intricate Arguments, of Curiosities, and Frivolous Confutations, but a Practicall One, consisting more in Doing than in Talking.

Mat. 22.  
31, 32.

41, 42, 4  
44, 45.



Agreeable to this, he did not dress up his Pre-  
 cepts and Doctrines in Humane Learning, or  
 deliver them in the Eloquent way of the *Greeks*  
 and *Romans*: Had he done so, the Motive of our  
 Faith and Obedience had been Humane: But he  
 gave them in the plainest Method possible, by  
 Similies and Parables, wrapt up in the Reverend  
 old way of Proverbs and Common-sayings, that  
 the veriest Ideots might understand them. He  
 conveyed to us the high Notions of God and his  
 Kingdom, by the Familiar Comparisons of a *King-  
 ly Feast*, of a *House-holder* and his *Husband-men*:  
 He did adumbrate the different Members of the  
 Christian Church by the Emblem of a *Field*, and  
 its several kinds of *Seed*, of a *Net*, and the sever-  
 al sorts of *Fishes* it catches, &c. This is low  
 as the World reposes; but how great is it in it-  
 self? For, these very Sayings and Expressions he  
 brought down from Heaven, from the Bosom of  
 his Father, where he lay from the beginning, and  
 was in time bred and instructed: *All things that*  
*I have heard of the Father, I have made known*  
*unto you.*

He pull'd down the Ceremonies and Paper-  
 Building of the Law, it is true; But did he not  
 make amends for this, by Erecting in the room  
 of it a strong and beautiful Building, made up of  
 Marble and Precious Stones? He rejected indeed the  
 the



the common Interpretation which the Rabbyes had put upon it ; but in the mean time highly recompenc'd that loss by his Admirable and Divine Glosses : They understood it of the Outward Acts only , but he went further , and extended it to the very Thoughts : They said that Men ought not to *Kill* one another ; He said that they ought not to *Hate* one another : They said that Men ought not to Defile the Bed of their Neighbours by *Adulteries* ; He said that they ought not to Defile the Temple of the Holy Ghost, their Souls and Bodies, by Unclean *Thoughts* and Impure *Looks*, &c.

In other things he absolutely repealed the Laws of *Moses*, as being too condescending to Humane Inclinations, and favouring too much of a Carnal Mind : One of his Politick Laws was *Retaliation*, *An Eye for an Eye, a Tooth for a Tooth*, &c. He ras'd it, and in stead of *Revenge*, so sweet to Corrupt Nature, set up that Divine and Transcending Law, *The Forgiveness of Injuries*, even with this terrible Clause, That unless we do so, we must never pretend to God's Pardon. Another allowed of *Hatred* and Immortal Wars against the seven Nations of *Canaan* ; He abolisht that *Bloody and Cruel Indulgence*, and plac'd the *Love of Enemies*, that Heavenly and God-like Virtue, in the room of it. Things connived at,

at. 5. 31, 32 as Divorcements upon Frivolous Pretences, he redrest, and New-modell'd and brought back to the first Institution, *None Lawful but in case of Adultery.* To be short, he gave a Systeme of the most refined and wholsom Laws, and restored to its Integrity pure Reason, and the Law of God and Nature.

at 10. 18. He decided in a word the most Important and Essential Articles of Religion; the Immortality of the Soul, *Fear not them which Kill the Body, but are not able to Kill the Soul*: Future Rewards  
 at. 25. 46 and Punishments, *The Unrighteous shall go away into Everlasting Punishments, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.* Another would have declaimed and largely descanted upon these: The Wisest among the Heathens made their most serious and frequent Meditations about the Immortality of the Soul, *Socrates, Cato, Tully, Seneca*, and others; and the most Eminent among the Ancient Fathers of the Church can never say enough, when they light upon the Subject of a Future Irreversible State: But our Saviour in short solved the Question, and made no more of it than an ordinary thing; A sign that these Dreadful Truths were familiar to him, his hopes of them sure, and his thoughts of them as calm as ours when employ'd upon our most ordinary Concerns.

As for Mysteries and Speculations, although they are the highest and abstrusest of all, yet no Religion has fewer than the Christian: Our Blessed Saviour in Compassion to our Infirmary contented himself with revealing them that were absolutely necessary to be known, and the best Motives to Holiness; his Incarnation and Satisfaction, the Operation of God's Holy Spirit, and a few more: And they that make a hard Science of Christian Divinity, as if it was full of Difficulties and insuperable Speculations, are very ungrateful to our Saviour, to multiply and intangle what he deliver'd so single, and darken what he spoke so clear; And very injurious to Men, to fill their Minds with frivolous and insignificant Scruples; besides the unspeakable mischief which they bring upon themselves, by offering to support the Ark of the Covenant of *Faith*, with the bold and unhallowed Hand of Humane Reason, and Philosophical Disquisition.

And that nothing should be wanting to complete the Perfection of Christian Religion, he gave the best Demonstration in the World of the Mysteries which he taught; that of the *Event*, and *Time*, and *Experience*: He did not begin his Preaching by hard fullen Principles, and barren tedious Postulata, but by plain Morals, and obvious necessary Duties: And when the reason-

ableness

Mat. 5.  
and 6.  
and 7.

ableness of these was conspicuous to his Hearers, then he deliver'd what he had to reveal of abstruse Mysteries, his Co-essentiality with his Father, the Personality of the Holy Ghost, &c. He would not let his Disciples tell Men that he was the Messiah, that he was to suffer to redeem Mankind, that he was to be Glorified after his Death, and that his Transfiguration was a token of his Resurrection, till the event had proved these to be true : *Tell no Man that I am the Christ, that I am to suffer, that I was Transfigured, till I am risen from the Dead* ; for then the thing cannot be redargu'd, and must needs be believ'd.

Had he begun by revealing of Mysteries, Man's Unbelief had had a fair Plea to palliate its stumbling at them ; but he let Time prove these, and then taught them. Trinity was seen in his Baptism before ever he spoke of it : His Miracles had prov'd him to be the Son of God, a long time before he gave himself for such : And what better Proof and Demonstration of the Personality of the Holy Ghost could he have given to a Socinian, than by his visible descent upon his Disciples, on the Feast of *Pentecost* ?

Thus it appears that Christ's Doctrine is the best in the World, consisting of most wholsom and necessary Laws, sublimest and abstrusest Speculations ;

Joh. 15.  
and 16.  
and 17.

Mat. 16. 20.  
17. 9.

t. 3. 16, 17

2. 3.

culations; and yet all deliver'd in the plainest Method, and proved by the strongest and most convincing sort of Demonstration : And what remains but concluding, that in this point also, *he has done very well?*

I come to the last thing propos'd; his *Miracles*, in which *he has done well* likewise.

The Miracles wrought by *Moses* seem to have been more famous; Dividing the Sea, Beating Water out of a Rock, Raining Bread from Heaven, Changing the Rivers of *Egypt* into Blood, Consuming the Land with Monsters and Diseases, Sending Darkness on the Incredulous Country, Killing all their First-born in a Night, &c. But the Miracles wrought by Christ are greater nevertheless, if we look on them with relation to the design which he propos'd, the Benefit and Advantage, not Destruction of Men.

He walkt on the Sea, (and might as well have divided it) not to drown an Army, but to instruct his Disciples. He changed Water into Wine, (and might as well have turned it into Blood) not to starve the Feast for want of Drink, but to supply the Master's Want, and shew him Gratitude for his kind Invitation. He multiplied the Loaves, (and might as soon have dropt them down from Heaven) not to lead a Nation up and down in a Desert, but to provide for a famisht and weary



weary Multitude , and give them means to follow him and be profited by his Holy Doctrine : He might as well have beat the Wine out of a Stone , as produc'd it out of Water , and done his other Miracles one way as the other ; but Fame was not his aim, he had only a mind that his Miracles should be beneficial to Mankind. He did not Depopulate a Country, and Kill the well-Persons in it, that they might let him go and set up for a Temporal Prince ; but cured the Sick, and raised the Dead, that they might believe him to be an Eternal Prince, that was come on purpose to lead the way to Heaven, and take them up thither along with him. To Kill and Destroy that one may be believed, is the part of an Angry Judge ; and this was the Person which God, and *Moses* by his Command, did put on : but to be Kill'd that others may be Saved, is the part of a Redeemer, of the God of Love and Peace, and this was our Saviour's Character.

And then, Did *Moses* raise any Dead Man ? Did he drive out Devils ? Did he know the Thoughts of Men ? Did he Cure Diseases by Words ? Did his very Garments heal the Sick ? As for the Prophets that followed *Moses* , their Miracles were often destructive, witness the Fire which *Elijah* call'd down from Heaven on the Souldiers of the King of *Samaria* ; and the Two  
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and Forty Boys torn down by a Bear at the request of *Elisba* : And where they were beneficial, as in the Widow's case, whose Oyl was increased, and the *Shunamite's*, whose Son was brought to Life again; the Workers were but Forerunners of Christ, and all together wrought not half so many as himself alone. 2 King. 2. 2.  
2 King. 4.

His Miracles were not publick as those of *Moses*, because he would not prove his Doctrine by any thing that might be interpreted Ostentation, and the Motive of it, Vain-glory : He chiefly design'd to benefit Men by them, and therefore seldom did any before Great Men, specially when not disposed to make a good use of them, for fear they should prove to them Occasions of Scandal. He commonly forbid the Assistants to divulge him : In this very instance of the Text he commanded the Multitude not to spread the Fame of his Curing the Deaf-dumb Man : He knew that it was more the Interest of others than his, that he should be known and inquired after : He was unwilling to be disturbed in his most Important Occupations, *Teaching the Gospel*, as he must needs have been by a Concourse of People, if he had made any great noise. He knew that the Pharisees would come and dispute, and interrupt him, if they heard of his Miracles; or be hardned and blaspheme, and ascribe them to

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the Power of the Devil; and, these Impediments to himself, and Temptations to others, he was willing to remove.

But on the other hand, they were not done in a Corner, as the Heathenish Impostures, but in open Day, and before the Face of the World; sometimes in the High-way as it happen'd: Not by Tricks and Conjurations, and frightful Rites, but by Words, by Touching, and by Prayer. No foregoing Preparatives were requisite, he did them on a sudden, and whenever required. He did not use various Methods, and require different Performances of those whom he was to work them upon: *Faith* and *Repentance* was all he demanded; and, *Go in peace, be cured*, all the Rites and Words he used.

But his greatest Miracles are still behind. Did *Moses* communicate his Miracle-working Virtue to his Followers, as our Saviour to his Apostles, and (which is more) to after-Ages, sometimes common-ordinary Men? Did *Moses* propagate his Religion all the World over as Christ did? This is the Promise made to his Apostles, That they should do *greater Works than his*; for what can be greater than the Conversion of the whole World? Other Miracles may be counterfeited, but this is the Finger of God: The Devil may do a Trick to delude Men, but not to lose his  
Empire,

Empire, and be cast out of the World. The *Jews* and their Religion never had footing but in a small Tract of Land, *Judea*: The *Heathens* were divided into a hundred different Sects; both upheld by Force and Arms, Laws and Magistrates, as well as the *Mahometans* now: but this was done without Humane Strength; the whole World turned Christians of their own accord, without Force, without Kings, without Arms; at the bare Preaching of Christ Crucified, and by suffering when they were able to raise Formidable Armies, as *Tertullian* a Writer of those Times In Apol. does attest.

O Great Christ then in his Miracles as well as in all the rest! *He has done well in all things*: Let us be as true Disciples to him; as he was true Master to us: Let us do our Duty as he has done his Part; and if any Adversary shall attack him, let us answer, *He has done all Things well*.

To conclude. I say that there is no Ground of Scandal in our Saviour's whole Ministry, and that they that are offended at his Circumstances, or other things, are so without a cause; *And blessed are they that are not offended in him*. Mat. xi. 6.

Your God was an obscure Man, says the *Jew*; Your Saviour was himself Crucified, crys the *Heathen*; and I say, *All the better*. These things are not contrary to his Design, nor inconsistent with the Greatness of a Redeemer. No

No King is disparaged for not being a great Mathematician : No Doctor is found fault with for not being a good Sword-Man: Neither of them is blamed for not living an *Asketick* and Mortified Life ; because these things are not in their way : If a King be a good Ruler, and a Scholar a Bookish Man, it is enough : and why then should any Body desire that a Holy Man should be either a King or a Doctor, a Rich-wealthy Man, or a Learned-Curious Teacher ?

Is Death and Misery incompatible with Holyness ? No. It may be with Humane Greatness, but not with the Greatness of a Prophet : Nay, Sufferings make part of his Greatness ; for, to suffer like a Christian, is the infallible Character of a great Mind ; and to be truly Humble, is to be truly Honourable.

Let no Body therefore miss these things in Christ ; he was to be great another way : And that he was so, I have sufficiently evinc'd.

Let this be our answer to a Heathen, or a Jew, or the Prophane Men of this Age.



F I N I S.

